

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A router comprising:

routing means for routing an IP packet;

an infrared-ray-emitting unit for emitting an infrared ray to an external apparatus; and

control means for controlling said infrared-ray-emitting unit to emit an infrared ray based on a signal for controlling said external apparatus in accordance with data included in an IP packet received by said routing means.

2. A router according to claim 1, wherein an apparatus exchanging an IP packet with said routing means is a computer.

3. A router according to claim 2, wherein a control protocol adopted between said router and said computer is an RTSP (Real Time Streaming Protocol).

4. A router according to claim 2 or 3, said router further comprising:

an input unit for inputting an analog signal output by said external apparatus; and

conversion means for converting said input analog signal into a digital signal, which is disassembled into IP packets to be output to said computer.

5. A router according to claim 4, wherein said

external apparatus is an audio/video apparatus.

6. A router according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein said infrared-ray-emitting unit can be mounted on and dismounted from a main body of said router.

7. A router according to any one of claims 1 to 6, said router having a plurality of said infrared-ray-emitting units, which can each be mounted on and dismounted from a main body of said router.

8. A router comprising:

an infrared-ray-emitting device for controlling an external apparatus; and

an analog input port for receiving an analog signal from said external apparatus.

9. A router according to claim 8, wherein said analog input port comprises an audio-signal input sub-port for inputting an analog signal and a video-signal input sub-port for inputting a video signal.

10. A method for controlling an audio/video apparatus by using a router, comprising the steps of:

emitting an infrared ray based on a signal for controlling said audio/video apparatus from said router to said audio/video apparatus in accordance with a request made by a computer connected to said router;

driving said router to convert an analog signal

supplied by said audio/video apparatus as a result of execution of an operation at said above step to said router into a digital signal; and

outputting said digital signal obtained as a result of conversion from said router to said computer.